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DEVERE ALLEN

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GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT and President Hoover have, in their official capacities and with the utmost politeness, exchanged notes on the question of the negotiations with Canada looking toward the construction of a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterway. Had this been merely a formal exchange of correspondence between the executive of a State and the Chief Executive of the United States, we might be warranted in discussing the case on its merits. But Franklin Roosevelt chose to reduce the question to the status of a political controversy. The letter he addressed to the President was at the same time given to the press for publication. He was all too obviously attempting to convince the voters that he was more ardent than his political opponent in advocating "immediate construction of the deep waterway" and "development of abundant and cheap power." Mr. Hoover promptly accepted the implied political challenge. He declared that it would be unconstitutional for the Governor of New York to intervene in the international negotiations, and added that the "purely domestic" problems involved would have to be considered after the conclusion of the treaty. When that time came, Mr. Hoover said, he would be happy to discuss the issue "with you and other governors." The President's final sentence was a triumph of delicate insult: "Having ardently advocated for more than ten years," Mr. Hoover wrote, "this shipway from Duluth and Chicago to the sea, I am glad to know that it will meet with your support."

THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT is as unwilling as the United States to make any real reduction in its military establishment is indicated by the British reply to the Hoover arms proposal. According to the statement read by Mr. Stanley Baldwin to the House of Commons on July 7, the British army is already below the number recognized as necessary for the maintenance of internal order. His Majesty's Government can consent to the abolition of tanks only above a weight of twenty tons; and it cannot accept the Hoover suggestion that all aerial bombing be abolished. The one constructive idea advanced by the British plan is that the size of future war vessels be reduced. It asks that the battleship be reduced from 35,000 to 22,000 tons, and that in the future no cruisers larger than 7,000 tons or carrying guns exceeding a caliber of 6.1 inches be constructed. Unless the submarine is abolished, the British are unwilling to cut their destroyer strength. Valuable as is the proposal to reduce the size of future war vessels, the fundamental weakness of the British plan is that it affects only the construction of new ships. Unlike the Hoover proposal which would involve immediate scrapping of certain vessels, the British plan would continue navies at their present strength; any savings would accrue only gradually as replacements are made. Moreover, there is the positive danger that if the size of the battleship is merely reduced, the American Congress would be willing to authorize the replacement of our fifteen battleships in 1937, whereas if the present giant size were maintained the cost of replacement would be so enormous that Congress would refrain altogether from any new battleship construction. Unless the British supplement their plan with a proposal for immediate reduction, it is only a deception.

IN THE FIGHT OVER BEER the Democrats in Congress are discovering that in politics one may be indiscreetly valorous. When they were in convention assembled they dared all for the cause, and did not hesitate to insert in the prohibition plank the words: "We favor immediate modification of the Volstead Act to legalize the manufacture and sale of beer." Back in the House in the sober light of the morning after, they find that "immediate" is taken by the rude Republicans to mean "now," and to vote now for modification puts the valiant Democrats in an unfortunate position. If they win, their plank loses much of its campaign force; it will have lost point as an argument, being already realized. If they lose, the triumphant drys can declare that the country is not so very wet after all, and maybe it will be just as well to stick by the more moderate Republican program. And Governor Roosevelt, who accepted the party platform "100 per cent," is in the same delicate position. He may adopt the stand of Senator Ashurst of Arizona, who, in discussing the proposal of Senator Bingham for amendment of the home-loan bank bill to include 3.2 per cent beer, declared: "I stand without equivocation or evasion for the Democratic platform. But it is up to the Democrats to say when the platform will be put into effect." In this case we respectfully suggest to the candidate that he

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insert a glossary in his opening campaign speech. "By 'immediate modification,' fellow-Democrats," he might say, "we mean 'modification after next November 8 when we are safely in.' With this minor correction, I accept the platform 100 per cent."

THE CONFERENCE of the League for Independent Political Action, meeting July 9 and 10 in Cleveland, voted to support Norman Thomas for President and indorsed a generally progressive party platform. "Our task," said Howard Williams, national director of the league, "is to furnish the people an adequate philosophy of government, a definite program of action, and an organization springing from the grass roots." Although the conference was unwilling, in its indorsement of Mr. Thomas, to pledge itself necessarily to "support every feature in the ultimate program of the Socialist Party," it pronounced itself in favor of a "party of the people," who would unite to control the government, in contradistinction to the increasingly Fascist color of the executive power. The conference refused to vote for a straight repeal plank, but declared: "While on democratic principles we recognize the right of the people to vote on the abolition or modification of the Eighteenth Amendment, we condemn the Republican and Democratic parties for subordinating urgent economic issues to the liquor question." Unemployment insurance, direct relief for unemployed, the six-hour day for federal employees, and the public ownership and control of public utilities were some of the concrete proposals inserted in the platform. The conference was largely attended and the platform enthusiastically indorsed.

NO ONE CAN DENY that the War Department has become a master of military propaganda. How else can one explain that "purely by accident" a George Washington bi-centennial military tournament took place in the waterfront stadium of Chicago simultaneously with the Democratic convention? Some 1,200 troops, drawn from various forts, were concentrated in camp on the edge of the lake commanded by a major general and a brigadier general. Every night the performance went on. The spectacle of fifty airplanes in the sky coincided accidentally with the hours of the departure of the delegates to the convention. The foreign-born were interested by making every night a Czecho-Slovakian, or Scandinavian, or what-not night. The major general entertained lavishly at dinner in one of the hotels; the cost of the fireworks sent off in the city of the starving and unpaid would have fed a good many out-of-work people. In the convention itself an illuminated, moving electric sign, the only one allowed, made it impossible for the delegates to overlook the merits of the tournament should they, by any chance, have failed to see the airplane or the trench-hatted soldiers marching through the Loop when the delegates were moving out of the hall.

AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT DECISION affecting the rights of Negroes has been handed down by the Maryland Court of Appeals in granting a new trial to Euel Lee. Readers of *The Nation* will recall that Euel Lee, aged and friendless Negro, was a few months ago convicted of murdering a white farmer and sentenced to be hanged. He was represented by the International Labor Defense, which was first instrumental in saving him from lynching, and later in having his case transferred to another section of Maryland where it was thought he would be assured a fair trial. His conviction was appealed on the ground that no member of his race had sat on the jury that tried him. It has for years been the practice in Maryland, as in many other States, to bar Negroes from acting as jurors, although there is nothing in the Maryland statutes prohibiting them from serving in that capacity. The Court of Appeals, in ordering a new trial, declared that this practice, both generally and with specific reference to the Lee case, denied to the Negroes "that equality of protection which has been secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States." There is little doubt that Negroes in other States where there has been discrimination will henceforth demand that they be permitted to sit on juries as a matter of constitutional right. Not only for the Negroes is this victory important, but also for the radical International Labor Defense, which fought the Lee case through without help from other organizations.

JAMES McNEILL, Governor-General of the Irish Free State, has demanded that President de Valera publicly apologize for certain acts of members of his government which McNeill considers were "deliberately discourteous" to him as the representative of the British crown in the Free State. Of no great importance in itself, this incident nevertheless reflects the extent to which relations between the Free State and England have lately been strained. The Governor-General did not help matters any when, in defiance of the state-secrets act, he released for publication all the official correspondence concerning this question that he had exchanged with the De Valera government. This new quarrel comes, unfortunately, just at a time when hope was growing that at least one of the major disputes between London and Dublin would be adjusted. President de Valera had suspended the annual payments due England as compensation for the Irish farm property which English landlords had been forced to turn over to the peasants some years ago. Believing that De Valera had actually repudiated this obligation, the British Parliament voted by way of retaliation to impose a 100 per cent duty on all imports from the Free State. But when it was discovered that the money involved was being put into a special fund, the ultimate disposition of which would depend upon anticipated arbitration, the moderate members of the British Parliament and other English leaders promptly moved to bring the question to arbitration. It remains to be seen whether this move toward at least partial reconciliation will be halted by the Governor-General's ill-timed outburst.

COLONEL FREDERICK POPE, an engineer of New York City, has upon his own initiative and acting as a private citizen directly interested himself in the question of American recognition of Soviet Russia. He talked recently with officials in Washington, and although reports from the capital suggest that there is little hope of any change in the American attitude, Colonel Pope found his conversations in Washington encouraging enough to persuade him that it was worth while to proceed to Russia, where he laid his proposals before the Moscow authorities. His plan is to have the United States send an unofficial commissioner to Russia with

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a view to undertaking informal negotiations preliminary to formal recognition. A similar procedure was followed before we recognized Germany and Turkey after the World War. Only by the method of direct conversations can the misunderstandings that divide Moscow and Washington be cleared up. How else are the State Department and President Hoover officially to know, for example, just where Russia stands on the debt question? If the American policy has been sincere, something more than a mere blind for an undying hatred of the Communist system, Washington will take advantage of the opportunity which this intermediary has created.

TO THE SICK POOR, the visiting nurse must appear as the saving grace of an otherwise dark world. She relieves pain, she wards off death, she guards the lives of children, she brings an assurance of security and health into homes where poverty, malnutrition, and fear are the daily lot. In such times as these the demand for her ministrations in every large city throughout the country is greater than ever, just as they are increasingly difficult to provide through the ordinary channels of charity. In New York City it is announced that the Visiting Nurse Services of the Henry Street Settlement, which for thirty-nine years have given free service to the sick poor, must restrict their activities unless financial aid, public or private, is given. "During the six months ended July 1," runs the report, "our nurses made over 300,000 visits, 30,000 more than during the corresponding months of last year and 70,000 more than during the first half of 1930 . . . the sick among the lowest income groups who in other years insisted on paying ten or fifteen cents for a visit [which costs $1.15] now cannot afford even that gesture of self-support. . . . The Visiting Nurse Services have reached the limit of their resources." It is difficult to see how the City of New York can refuse to accept Felix Warburg's suggestion that the Visiting Nurse Services be taken over as a form of municipal relief.

THE ANNUAL JUNE SHOWER of honorary college degrees has fallen. And at least two of the citations did honor to both the recipients and donors. Princeton, in a handsome though somewhat delayed gesture, conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters upon a distinguished graduate of 1905, Norman Thomas, Socialist candidate for President of the United States. For seven years, from 1917 to 1924, Mr. Thomas was unofficially "discouraged" from speaking on the campus of his Alma Mater; we are glad to learn that Princeton has had the courage to reverse its attitude toward Mr. Thomas by a public gesture. The other citation of which we heartily approve is the honorary degree conferred by Smith College on Miss Josephine Roche, president of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company of Colorado, whose admirable and unprecedented labor policy and general good management have been cited before in *The Nation*. In this year of depression Miss Roche is able to report a 13 per cent increase in sales in the first quarter of 1932 over the same period in 1931 and a decrease of 26 cents per ton in the cost of production in 1931 as against 1928, while she pays her miners an average wage of $8 a day as compared with the $3.50 to $4 which prevails elsewhere in Colorado. Smith College could not have chosen a woman more worthy of recognition.

The Golden Age

KENNETH GRAHAME is dead, and this would be occasion enough, if occasion were needed, to reread "The Golden Age" and "Dream Days" as a gesture to a vanished youth. It is interesting to note that Mr. Grahame once told an interviewer that "the children were not any particular children. I never had any brothers and only one sister. They were any and all children." One might add that the books are not really for children to read, but for adults who remember—or perhaps who have forgotten their childhood. And the flavor of the incidents, reread in the harsh light of 1932, is faint, tinged with melancholy, sweetly archaic like a fairy tale with the folk magic left out and only the gentle incredibility left in.

The golden age of childhood is, for adults, irretrievably gone; the "Golden Age" of Mr. Grahame is gone, too. Written nearly forty years ago, the books describe another world, a world of tidy relationships, of expected events, of adults who moved serenely through their little sphere of visiting and teas and discipline for the young and life in the country over whose fields one's young charges roved widely and were always up to some devilment or other. The world, in short, before the war, which the children of today know nothing of and which their parents and guardians remember with a faint astonishment. These Edwards and Harolds and Charlottes of Mr. Grahame's, climbing in and out of their bedroom windows to escape restraint, christening the pig after a favorite uncle, building a huge bonfire to commemorate Trafalgar Day, living in their own world of knights and elves and enchanted princesses, and knowing themselves immeasurably remote from the unfriendly and incomprehensible world of the grown-ups who had power over them, have few counterparts today. Our children are more practical; depending on their social status, they occupy themselves with the movies or the radio, they are familiars of the machine, and their magic lies in the airplane and the dynamo, the flight of steel, the heavy security of concrete.

To go back to 1895 and Mr. Grahame out of this new world is somehow comforting. In the last story of "Dream Days" he tells how Charlotte, the youngest of the five, having inherited in due course the toys that all of them had used, finds herself deprived of them by one of the strange fiats of the grown-ups. An uncle is seized with the idea that the toys must be sent to a children's hospital. But Charlotte and Harold, who had last heired them, determine that not all of them shall go to strangers. In the middle of the night the two children steal downstairs to the nursery where the big box is ready to be shipped; they extract one of the dolls, by no means as fresh as she once had been, but dear still; they pull out the leather bull and a painted rooster from the ark. Solemnly they march down to the farthest corner of the garden and there bury these ancient playthings. They at least shall be kept from strange hands which may not touch them gently, from strange eyes which might not appreciate their worth. In the Garden of Mnemosyne there have been many such interments; treasures once precious and still cherished, which their owners wish to protect from an unfriendly world. Here Mr. Grahame wrote soundly and true; for this he, too, deserves his memorial resting-place.

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The Settlement at Lausanne

ASSUMING that reasonably prompt ratification follows by the participating nations, the settlement of the German reparations reached at Lausanne must stand as a forward step of the very first importance. It is an immensely better settlement than, at the beginning of the conference, there seemed any reason to hope for. It is the first real break in the clouds of the last three years, one might almost say since the armistice.

A realization of the importance of the settlement can hardly be achieved without a brief recollection of the whole history of German reparations, beginning with the preposterous figure of $125,000,000,000 originally suggested by Allied statesmen. This was followed by the hardly less preposterous figure of $64,000,000,000 proposed at a meeting of the Allied representatives at Boulogne in June, 1920; then by the Reparation Commission's figure of $31,680,000,000 in April, 1921; next by the Dawes Plan, which arranged a scale of annual payments but set no total; and next by the Young Plan, which fixed a total of $8,800,000,000. Even a year ago, after the Hoover moratorium, it would have been considered extremely optimistic to suppose that this amount would be reduced by France by as much as 50 per cent. The negotiators at Lausanne, however, have reduced the reparations payments to less than one-tenth the total fixed under the Young Plan. The agreement provides for payment of a bond issue totaling $750,000,000, which is less than the amount of two annual Young Plan instalments. No payments are to begin on these bonds for at least three years, and then only if the state of German credit permits their sale; they are to bear interest at 5 per cent and to be amortized at the rate of 1 per cent a year. This would mean an annual payment of approximately $45,000,000. Such a sum is thoroughly "payable." One need merely recall that in a period of hardly five months—from the end of July last year, when the "standstill" agreement was arrived at, to early December—Germany was somehow able to pay its private creditors about $250,000,000.

To the men who negotiated this agreement the highest praise must be given. One hardly knows whether to give the greatest credit to Ramsay MacDonald, for his dogged patience, his steady pressure on both the German and French negotiators, and his quiet determination that the conference must not fail, or to Edouard Herriot, who had a far more difficult public opinion at home to placate, and whose generosity and conciliatory attitude were almost revolutionary for a post-war French premier. One may argue that France could not have got more out of Germany and that it was in her interest to negotiate such a settlement; but for that matter it has been in France's interest for nearly fourteen years to negotiate a reasonable settlement. M. Herriot, whatever his motive, whatever the forces that impelled him, will be remembered as the statesman who actually did it. And even Von Papen, who won nearly everything, is to be congratulated on not overestimating what he could win.

This settlement was arrived at without the slightest help from the United States. Except for the moratorium now expired, we have not lifted a finger to help the world out of its impasse. What Europe has done at Lausanne will not begin to have the tremendous effect it could have on the revival of world confidence unless we show that we have the same sense of actualities, and are prepared to act in as generous a spirit as Great Britain, Italy, and France have acted. Any sense of consistency, any sense of justice, demands that the debts of the Allied governments to us should be, if not altogether canceled, then cut down to the merest fraction of their present total. The separate negotiations we originally entered into with each of our debtors were ostensibly based on the "ability to pay" of these debtors. That ability to pay is by any possible measurement much lower than it was at the time that the earlier settlements were arranged. Our debtors were then counting on huge payments from Germany to pay us in turn; those payments are now, even officially, a thing of the past. The debts were payable in terms of gold, and since the settlements were arranged, the international gold price level has fallen nearly 50 per cent. As international payments are ultimately made in terms of goods, this means that it requires almost twice as much real sacrifice for our debtors to make their payments to us now as it did when the agreements were signed.

But wholly apart from consistency and justice, every consideration of even the narrowest self-interest requires a drastic reduction of the debts. As long as the debts remain at their present level, the world will not be confident of the revival of international trade and the return of world stability, and the current stagnation and unemployment will continue. *The Nation* can only repeat here the comparison already made in its columns between the amount of the annual foreign debt payments now due our government—$270,000,000—and the present loss in the national income of actually a hundred times that sum—about $28,000,000,000—as a result of the current depression. It is no longer possible to deny the close connection between the crisis and the world's war-debt burden. But even if we assume that it would be possible for the world to achieve a real recovery with that burden unreduced, we cannot fail to recognize that if we allow France and England and Italy to make the very great sacrifices they have in scaling down the German reparations to less than a tenth of their previous total, while we in turn refuse to abate their debt to us by a penny, then we must reap nothing but the world's ill-will and hatred for years. The unfriendly reaction in Washington to the "gentleman's agreement" which accompanied the Lausanne proposals, and which in effect makes them contingent upon debt reduction, is not only discouraging but unrealistic.

A reduction of the war debts, of course, will not end our duty. Hardly less imperative is the immediate lowering of our disastrous tariff wall, which, ever since the Hawley-Smoot Act was passed, has automatically grown higher and higher, for all specific duties, as world prices have fallen. The tariff on Cuban raw sugar, to take but one example, has become nearly five times as high, in terms of the price of the product, as when the Hawley-Smoot Act was signed by the President. The tariff must be lowered if even radically reduced debts are to be paid.

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Relief and Politics

IT was Herbert Hoover who more than a year ago denounced Congress for "playing politics with human misery." The President conveniently ignored the fact that he was guilty of the same offense. Since then both Mr. Hoover and Congress have continued without let or hindrance to use the unemployment-relief problem for partisan purposes. During the coming campaign the Republicans will seek the help, particularly the financial support, of big business, the bankers, and conservative interests generally. The Democrats have already shown that they intend to play to the masses, to Franklin D. Roosevelt's "forgotten man." Hence it is not surprising to find the Republican nominee attempting to have government relief extended almost exclusively to the financial and industrial interests. He would have Congress appropriate the wholly inadequate sum of $300,000,000 to lend to States that cannot feed their own unemployed, but at the same time he wants the federal government to continue lending billions of dollars to the banks and the railroads.

Speaker Garner, the Democratic nominee for the Vice-Presidency, has damned the Hoover program as "class legislation," which it undoubtedly is. But Mr. Garner is advocating class legislation of another sort and for a similar purpose. He wants to make it possible for the "forgotten men," the jobless workers, the bankrupt farmers and small merchants, to borrow from the government precisely as the banks and the large corporations are doing. And all, of course, with a view to making Democratic voters out of the farmers, workers, and shopkeepers who normally vote Republican. To a certain extent we agree with Mr. Garner. Surely if big business is entitled to government help in the form of loans, the workers and small business men ought to have it too. The government belongs to the lower classes as much as it does to Charles Gates Dawes or the Pennsylvania Railroad.

In condemning the Garner plan Mr. Hoover said it would make "the Reconstruction Corporation the most gigantic banking and pawn-broking business in all history." It is already that, thanks largely to Mr. Hoover's skilful guidance, and its favors are being distributed with painstaking discrimination. For example, when the Dawes bank in Chicago was in difficulty recently, it found it a simple matter to borrow $80,000,000 from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, from the presidency of which Mr. Dawes himself had retired only the week before. At the same time thirty-nine smaller banks in Chicago, denied such help, were allowed to close their doors. Yet by throwing the resources of the Reconstruction Corporation open to all comers, as Speaker Garner would do, Congress would indeed be turning the government into a Gargantuan pawnshop. Just how is the Garner plan to be financed? And how are the jobless, the people who are in greatest need, to find the necessary security with which to obtain loans? The government erred when it established the precedent of lending money to banks and railroads, and the Democrats would now for political purposes magnify that error. In playing this political game both parties seem to have forgotten the increasing necessity of direct and prompt unemployment relief.

The Lesson of Art

THE old argument concerning the artist's obligations vis-a-vis the social problems of his time is once more to the fore. Not in a generation has the relevance of the poet's or the novelist's political creed to any discussion of his literary value been so hotly urged as it is being urged today. And yet it is strange how seldom the disputants seem to realize that the influence exercised upon society by poetry and by fiction is always much more far-reaching and subtle than that which results from an author's championship, however outspoken, of any definitely formulated creed.

Not only does literature serve to transmit and propagate conceptions of justice, honor, and propriety too complex to be clearly formulated except in connection with the concrete situations of a story, but it serves also to keep current an extensive repertory of possible responses to most of the usual crises, both major and minor, of life. If we are faced with the treachery of a friend, the loss of our fortune, or even the rudeness of a stranger, then our actions, our words, and our very thoughts are influenced if not determined by what we have read in books about the conduct of ideally consistent personages under the stress of similar circumstances.

Dazed as we are by the impact of dismayed surprise, we should be either paralyzed or, at least, capable of only the most primitive responses if it were not for the fact that we have often met the situation before in the course of our vicarious experiences with art, and if we were not, for that reason, familiar with a whole repertory of roles among which we have only to choose. Certain men have committed suicide and certain other men have lit cigarettes as the result of similar incidents—largely because of the stories which had impressed them most in youth; and certainly the lover who has an outraged husband to meet would do well to find out whether the latter is more impressed by melodrama than by social comedies.

Nor are those moments when we are aware that we ourselves or someone else is "playing a comedy" or "talking out of a book" more than merely the most obvious examples of an influence that is too all-pervasive to be always noticed. Art helps to establish in artificial societies all the opinions, all the phrases, and all the tastes which are regarded as "proper," "civilized," or "chic," and by means of which the members of that society recognize one another. And it does almost as much for societies less artificial. We can hardly appreciate a certain landscape, be amused by a certain situation, or even resent a certain injustice without leaning far more than we realize upon the various books which have cultivated the sensitivity to that landscape and that situation or formulated the protest against that injustice. Books that seem to teach nothing usually teach things too subtle to be analyzed, and a literate society *is* what it has read—not merely when it administers or votes, but almost every minute that it lives.

Art for art's sake never existed and never can exist. But an artist frequently fails to teach what he thinks he is teaching and frequently teaches something he did not know could be taught.

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The Soviet-Japanese War

By LOUIS FISCHER

Moscow, June 28

MOSCOW no longer fears a war with Japan. The Soviet Government looks into the future with greater calm than it did half a year ago, not only because of the difficulties which face Tokio in Manchuria, China, and at home, but because there is a vastly increased confidence here in the fighting capacity of the Red Army. Military attachés whom I have interviewed testify to the excellent morale of the Red Army and to the high quality of its training and equipment. If Japan were to start a war with the U. S. S. R. today it would meet a much worthier foe than the demoralized, corrupt, unprepared Czarist land and naval forces which quickly succumbed to a few surprise blows in 1904. Foreign experts quite unencumbered by sympathies for bolshevism or Russia are not at all certain that Japan would win a war against the Soviets. At any rate, such a war would be prolonged and extremely expensive. No one can foresee what anti-Japanese repercussions it would produce in China or how the peasants and factory employees in Japan would react to it. The sentiment here, therefore, is that unless Tokio statesmen lose their senses completely they will not attack Russia single-handed. To which one might add, however, that statesmen have lost their senses completely in the past.

Nevertheless, the Moscow political bourse is bearish on war prospects. Men acquainted with the international scene feel that no responsible Japanese government would dare to invade the Soviet Far East without a firm assurance from Poland and Rumania that they would attack Russia simultaneously in the west. Such an assurance will not be given readily. France and Poland entertain definite sympathies for the Japanese cause. American bankers have long suspected that Paris was supporting the yen and comforting Japan diplomatically. In Europe, on the Pacific, and at disarmament conferences, French and Japanese interests usually coincide. Yet France is probably not inclined to provoke a new and more devastating world war by inspiring a Polish offensive against Russia. Nor is Poland likely to accept French dictation unquestioningly. A few days ago in Warsaw a Polish Foreign Office official told me that Poland would be pleased to see Japan deprive the Soviet Union of Vladivostok and the Maritime Provinces. But Poland's financial stringency, economic distress, and domestic political disaffection are so great that any war would be a threat to her very existence. The United States ambassador in Warsaw, the American military attaché to Poland, the Soviet minister at Warsaw, Polish officials and journalists, and American correspondents in Warsaw with whom I have spoken during the last fortnight, all expressed the opinion that Poland's public mind was more preoccupied with German events than with Russian or Far Eastern events. And this is logical and natural.

The rising power of the Hitlerites is no comfort to Polish leaders. The National Socialists, the Steel Helmets, and the German Nationalists look longingly to the Polish Corridor and Danzig; and though the Nazis may hesitate long before sending Europe to the trenches again by seizing Polish territory, their ambitions in that direction create justifiable uneasiness in Pilsudski's entourage. Persistent gossip in Berlin about the possibility of a Franco-German rapprochement likewise has a disturbing effect on Polish politicians. To be sure, an agreement between Germany and France by the terms of which the Germans would get the Corridor as compensation for suspending reparations payments appears quite fantastic. Germany has too little to give France. Much more is involved, too, than the relations between these two countries. The unmitigated international economic depression, fast assuming the forms of utter collapse, serves as a further obstacle to such a Franco-German settlement. Yet Poland is perturbed by French coolness toward Polish financial needs and foreign political interests, especially so since important personages on the French General Staff are said to be wondering whether Poland, in its present state of weakness, would not be more of a liability than an asset in case of war.

Under these circumstances the possibility of a Polish attack on Russia must be discounted. It is not excluded. Nothing is excluded in the insane asylum which calls itself Europe. But it is not very likely. In the last six months the Bolsheviks have gone out of their way on numerous occasions to win the good-will of Poland. Soviet diplomats and newspapers have received orders from above to respect Polish sensibilities. Polish-Soviet trade is improving, and the Poles, God knows, need business. The Japanese, to be sure, have been active in Moscow and Warsaw courting Polish favor. Yet I do not think that Japan could depend on Polish cooperation at the beginning of its invasion of Siberia. Nor could it depend on Rumania.

Poland's preoccupation with Germany and its disinclination to be involved in a big military undertaking are the most reassuring factors in the Far Eastern situation. On the other hand, the assassination of Premier Inukai, the inflated influence of the immoderate militarists, the transfer of Japanese staff headquarters to Harbin nearer the Soviet frontier, and the evacuation of Shanghai, which released several Japanese army corps for operations in northern Manchuria, have had a disquieting effect on the Bolshevik press and Soviet public opinion.

The rulers of a country cannot leave anything to chance. Stalin cannot proceed on the assumption that the Japanese will weigh all factors calmly and refrain from aggression. Nations on the warpath have been known to inflict damage on themselves; witness Germany's unrestrained U-boat war. It looks as if Japan would not be foolhardy enough to engage the Red Army without allies. But too much is at stake for the Kremlin to trust to luck and Japanese wisdom. If the Mikado's forces had proceeded on to the Soviet Maritime Provinces immediately after taking Mukden on September 19, 1931, they would have found them poorly defended and easy to occupy. With a powerful aggressive neighbor just across the border, such a position of unpreparedness was intolerable to the Soviets, so the last six months have been spent in feverish activities with a view to

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strengthening Russia's Far Eastern front. An excellent red air fleet is stationed in the region. The Bolsheviks have been building Zeppelins. If Japan were to open hostilities now, Soviet aviation could probably spare sufficient units from defense purposes to bombard supply stations and army and navy bases in the Japanese archipelago. The harbor at Vladivostok has been mined, and it would take the Japanese at least several months of costly fighting to capture the coastline—unless Voroshilov and Blücher voluntarily retired to draw them inland, where the invaders would meet a well-equipped army with unsurpassed morale, numbering, according to an American military observer, from 125,000 to 150,000 men. It would be a first-class engagement; Japan could not carry off an easy victory. Japan might conceivably lose. Defeat would have a tremendous and incalculable effect on Nippon's international position.

The population of the Soviet Union suffers by reason of these efforts to reinforce Soviet lines of defense in Siberia. Factories which ought to be turning out goods for daily use or machines for production are making war supplies. Food is being diverted from the civil population to the army's reserves. Certain construction projects are retarded in order that others may be hastened to meet the exigencies of war. The war danger, in a word, upsets and distorts previously charted economic schemes. It frightens the peasants into withholding their produce from the market. Whenever the Bolsheviks begin to shout about the imminence of war, the village hoards its grain and begins to buy salt. This has happened several times since 1927. A war scare, moreover, can be used by unscrupulous politicians to suppress opposition and to hide the true causes of economic failures. Measures calculated to strengthen the front often weaken the rear, and I am not sure which is more decisive in time of conflict. Yet the Bolsheviks insist that the Trans-Siberian Railway must be double-tracked no matter what the expense, because signs of unpreparedness would simply tempt the enemy into Siberia. There is scarcely any section of the Soviet Union which escaped widespread ruin and destruction during the period of foreign military intervention between 1918 and 1921, and the fear of another invasion is enough to stimulate a violent preparedness psychosis.

Although the winter will bring some relief, the war scare is sure to flare up again next spring. There always remains the sense of uneasiness that Japan cannot be depended upon to keep the peace. The Russians, therefore, are intent on dispelling the atmosphere of hostility and uncertainty which dominates Soviet-Japanese relations. A concerted effort is being made to establish new cultural ties between the two countries, and the future may see Russian authors and artists traveling to Japan on good-will trips. More important is Moscow's desire to conclude a non-aggression pact with Tokio. Last year, when Yoshizawa, the Mikado's representative at the League of Nations, passed through Moscow to become Japan's new Foreign Minister, Litvinov and Karakhan met him at the railroad station and suggested negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a treaty of non-aggression. Nothing came of this suggestion. The Japanese did not know; perhaps they would want to undertake aggression. Any treaty can become a scrap of paper. Japan has disregarded the Kellogg Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty signed at Washington which pledged it to the principle of Chinese territorial integrity. Yet on occasions these potential scraps of paper act as little stumbling-blocks which delay the inception of wars, and Tokio has wished to keep the road clear. Moscow, nevertheless, continues to press Japan to sign the pact, and serious conversations may now be in progress. A friendly American gesture toward Russia could strengthen Moscow's hands in these pourparlers and guarantee a greater measure of peace on the Pacific. The only consideration which will finally sober the Japanese militarists is the knowledge that in the event of war against the Soviet Union America might help the Soviets. To be sure, the United States government does not like Bolsheviks and will not recognize a regime now approaching its fifteenth-anniversary celebrations. But if America wishes to prevent another war in which it is likely to be involved, the best thing to do is to improve Washington's relations with the Kremlin.

Japanese aggression on the Pacific is an expense and an embarrassment to the United States. America keeps its entire fleet in the Pacific. Mr. Stimson has stated, in effect, that to grant independence to the Philippines would make them a prey of Japan. Anti-Japanese agitation again lifts its head in the Hawaiian Islands. China buys less and American business loses money. Our insistence on the Open Door notwithstanding, Manchuria is closed to American investments and exports. All these unpleasant consequences of Japan's encroachment on the Asiatic mainland focus attention on the possibility, still remote, of open hostilities between Japan and the United States. Sensational, irresponsible journals in Japan boast that America's turn will come after Russia has been put in her place. Other war-mongers are not decided whether the first round ought to be with the United States or the Soviet Union. The violent utterances of these publications are quoted in the Soviet press and invested with undue significance. The Far Eastern issue promises to become a hardy perennial. It will still be alive after the Presidential elections in November.

In the absence of Russian-American cooperation the U. S. S. R. must depend on its own resources. The intense military activity in Siberia during 1932 has enabled Moscow to talk more firmly with Tokio, and the new Japanese government seems to be impressed by the improvements in the Red Army's position in the Far East. Tokio, too, can no longer underestimate the task of pacifying Manchuria. The fine imperial German army, numbering at least 300,000 men, which occupied the Ukraine in 1918 never really succeeded in subjugating that country, and it never got the bread for which the invasion was undertaken. It may be years before Manchuria becomes an asset instead of a huge budgetary outlay. A combat between Japan on the one hand and the Soviet Union and the Chinese insurgents on the other would constitute a severe test to the Japanese army and navy. I think, therefore, that the Far East may now look forward to a period of peace by default.

The war danger, to be sure, remains, and for years, perhaps, Russia and Japan, fully armed, will gaze fiercely at each other from opposite sides of the thin Manchurian fence. But final security lies in the mounting industrial power of the Soviet Union and in the economic decline of Japan. Peace could be guaranteed earlier by international diplomatic action. Without it, Moscow can trust only in the fulfilment of the first and second Five-Year Plans. Or will the world blow up before then?

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An Open Letter to Oswald G. Villard

DEAR MR. VILLARD: In your issue of May 11, 1932, you wrote an interesting and important letter to Governor Roosevelt. This letter ends with some fourteen pertinent questions to which you asked an answer, yes or no. You do a public service in trying to compel candidates to face real issues.

Of course neither you nor I nor anyone else has a right to ask of Franklin Roosevelt any more than that he shall declare where he stands as a Democrat. We all know that he is not a Socialist or a radical of any sort. There is, however, about your open letter something more than a faint suspicion that perhaps you and *The Nation* would be comparatively well satisfied if Governor Roosevelt were to declare himself on the liberal side of your fourteen questions. It is this suspicion that prompts me to ask you in turn to declare yourself categorically on some deeper questions than you have raised for the Governor to answer.

All that you have said about Governor Roosevelt's equipment and opportunities, I can say of you and more. It is because of the place that you personally hold in American life and the immensely useful role filled by *The Nation* that it seems to me worth while to ask you to declare yourself once again and very explicitly on the fundamental problems of our times. These questions go much deeper than a half-hearted approach to government operation of the railroads and possibly of the power industry. The importance of any answers to these specific questions which you ask on power and the control of industry is considerably affected by the answer to a preliminary and more fundamental question. Are you seeking to patch up for a while longer the capitalist system or are you seeking to change in orderly fashion that system to the end that we may establish a cooperative commonwealth? It is this basic inquiry which prompts my specific questions:

1. Do you believe that the capitalist nationalist social order is doomed? Yes or no?

2. Do you believe that the effective management of the machine age in its present development, as well as the realization of any worth-while ideals of plenty, peace, or freedom, requires social ownership of those things necessary for the common life and their management for use rather than for profit? Yes or no?

3. Assuming that you share in some degree the present enthusiasm for economic planning, do you believe that such planning can be plastered on the essential and chaotic planlessness of our profit system? Yes or no?

4. Do you believe that capitalism can remain capitalism and yet get rid of unemployment and abolish cyclical depression? If so, how?

5. Do you believe that the world can stagger out of the depths of this depression without consciously lightening its present load of fantastic debts piled up during the war and post-war years? If so, how?

6. Do you believe that our present capitalism or the fascist form of capitalism to which we may be drifting can reasonably be expected to preserve the peace of the world if the struggle for material advantage, prestige, and power implicit in it continue to characterize all social relations, foreign and domestic? Yes or no?

7. Assuming that you acknowledge the fantastic and cruel insanity of our present system and the essential reasonableness of socialism—I use the word in a most inclusive sense—do you think it is possible to plan for a relatively orderly and peaceful transition? If so, by what means?

8. Do you believe that the process of transition requires as its basis and inspiration the assertion of a new and revolutionary philosophy of loyalty to a cooperative society, in a classless world in which the solidarity of workers with hands and brain will cross national and racial lines? Yes or no?

9. Do you believe that an orderly transition period requires careful plans consciously directed to the rapid socialization of land, natural resources, banking, and the principal means of production, their functional administration, and their control under a general planning board? Yes or no?

10. Do you believe that taxation of land values and of incomes and inheritances should be used not merely to provide the revenue but also to bring about an actual transfer of ownership and control? Yes or no?

11. Do you believe that it is essential to build up organizations of the workers with hand and brain in consumers' cooperatives, in labor unions, and in a political party which will express the needs and ideals of the workers? Yes or no?

12. If you believe in such organization, is it not more reasonable to accept the Socialist Party and to work to make it stronger rather than to wait vainly for the emergence of some non-existent mass movement, progressive rather than Socialist in nature, and more appropriate to an earlier stage of capitalism than to this hour of crisis? Yes or no?

NORMAN THOMAS

Mr. Thomas's questions are frequently not clear, lack adequate definition, and nearly all smack of the oratorical, thus making it extremely difficult to give him categorical answers. None the less I reply as follows:

1. Yes, if it continues as it has since 1914.

2. In ignorance of what "those things necessary for the common life" are, or what constitute "worth-while ideals of plenty" I answer no, while favoring the socialization of utilities, pipe-lines, the public ownership of natural resources, and the control and direction of such broken-down industries as coal and iron.

3. Yes. But in using the phrase "planning . . . plastered on . . . planelessness," Mr. Thomas puts the question in a biased form.

4. Yes, by unemployment insurance and planning, and by government control of key industries as above.

5. No.

6. No.

7. Yes, by the same kind of evolution by which we are now proceeding, with greater speed than most people realize, toward increasing socialization, frequently proposed and carried through by the conservatives themselves.

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8. Yes. "My country is the world, my countrymen all mankind."

9. Yes. I believe that the transition period requires orderly planning, but I am not certain that nearly so much socialization will be required as this question assumes, and I specifically except the land.

10. Within limitations, yes; again excepting the land.

11. Yes, but I am opposed to any party which shall be restricted to being a purely one-class party, on whichever side that might be organized.

12. No.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

The World's Economic Crisis

By J. A. HOBSON

Hampstead, England, June 22

THE world's economic situation suggests the following chain of argument:

1. This country and the whole world are suffering from a failure of the purchasing power of consumers to keep pace with the increasing power of production in most branches of industry and agriculture.

2. The insufficient rate of consumption is not due primarily to any insufficiency of money income. For normally in all processes of production the money costs, currently paid out as wages, salaries, rent, interest, profit, are sufficient to buy the whole product.

3. If, therefore, there is insufficient purchase of consumption goods, this must be due either to an excessive purchase of new producers' goods (through saving and investment), or else to withholding of some purchasing power from purchase either of consumption goods or producers' goods (capital goods).

4. The present visible excess of productive power must be attributed in the first place to an earlier tendency to put more income into the purchase of new production goods than is required to supply consumption goods at the rate they can be purchased by the money that remains in consumers' hands.

5. If this attempt to create and operate an excess of productive power is made, it must express itself in a period of overproduction and collapse of prices, to be followed by a slowing down of production and a stoppage of employment of all the less efficient capital and labor.

6. When this stage is reached, effective saving for the creation and operation of new capital must be greatly reduced. For profits, the chief source of business capital, will be reduced, and the money savings that are still made will lie on deposit waiting for a recovery of trade in order to get invested.

7. If this is a correct account of the situation and its causation, no remedy can be effective unless it corrects the initial tendency to create capital too fast—to oversave.

8. Since it is generally admitted that the richer classes can and do save a larger proportion of their incomes than the poorer classes, it appears that oversaving can only be stopped either by a tendency toward greater equality in incomes or by processes of taxation or social ownership which divert larger quantities of higher incomes to public revenue and expenditure.

9. This analysis condemns as positively injurious the cutting of salaries, wages, and pensions in public services and the curtailing of such services and of local expenditure upon works of public utility.

10. If all the money thus saved for the taxpayer and the ratepayer were certain to be spent by them without delay in demand for consumption goods, it would not worsen the immediate situation so far as volume of employment went, but would only divert some expenditure on necessaries to expenditure on comforts and luxuries, with grave incidental damage to the hygiene and morale of the nation.

11. But since direct taxes and rates are mostly paid by the richer classes, the net effect of such public policy is to worsen the inequality of incomes and so to obstruct the path of economic recovery. It is doubtful whether such a policy of public economy even helps to balance the budget. For if, as seems certain, it reduces private consumption, lowers prices, and enlarges the volume of unemployment, the public revenue may suffer in tax yields as much as it gains in economies of expenditure. Moreover, the cut in the British dole may be attended by a corresponding increase in the number of unemployed.

12. If, as is widely urged, public economy is to be attended by a lowering of wages in our export trades, with a view to increasing our share of the shriveling foreign trade, further trouble is in store. For even if such cuts in wages were accepted by the workers and some enlargement of foreign markets were attained, the reduced wage rates of a larger number of workers in these trades would not be likely to bring a net increase in their demand for consumption goods.

13. The cut in costs of production in our export trades would, in the present state of the world, almost certainly fail in its objects, provoking competition in wage-cutting among our foreign competitors and a rise in the tariff walls of countries whose markets we sought to enter.

14. But supposing cheaper labor did enable us to enlarge our foreign markets, our lower selling prices would not help the recovery of a world suffering from excessive falls of prices. It would only shift a little of our unemployment to the other countries whose goods we ousted by our sweating policy.

15. If we accept the plain truth that, since we are living and working in a world economic system, the recovery and health of one country cannot be got at the expense of other countries, we shall perceive that these attempts to set our separate hauses in order are futile and inimical to that world understanding and cooperation which alone can win security and progress.

16. There is an increasing tendency among the statesmen of most countries to accept this truth and to make it the basis of some early practical monetary policy. But the monetary measures taken in the several countries for their

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own recovery do not betoken any clear grasp of the vital issue—namely, the putting of a larger volume and a larger proportion of the spending power in the hands of those who will spend it on consumption goods. For unless action is first stimulated in consumer markets, it is useless to offer abundant supplies of cheap bank credits or investment capital to industrial concerns. These latter cannot use more capital profitably unless they can have reasonable security that their enlarged outputs can be sold without further fall of prices. And this confidence they cannot get unless they know that the consuming public will have the wherewithal to purchase the increased supplies.

17. Inflation, or reflation by international action, can only operate successfully so far as it secures that an increasing proportion of the enlarged supply of money passes into the hands of consumers to be expended without delay in demand for consumers' goods.

18. Finally, such *ad hoc* creation of more purchasing power, if rightly applied, could only produce a temporary recovery. When the economic system was restored to normal health, the return of surplus income in the shape of high profits, rents, dividends, et cetera (payments in excess of what is needed to evoke the use of the factors of production) would begin once more to throw the working of capitalism out of gear by inciting attempts to save an excessive proportion of the aggregate income.

19. This "surplus" forms an irrational element in our economic system which can only be absorbed and utilized by conscious organization on the part of our economic society.

Food, Drink, and Politics

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, July 9

IF you hunger and thirst, be patient. The nation is in the midst of a grave economic and political crisis in which the wants of Big Business and Big Politics must necessarily come first. Hence the Democrats in Congress have just enacted a relief bill designed to show that they are anxious to provide food, jobs, and credit; and hence President Hoover is preparing to give it a veto designed to show that he is opposed to "radical measures." When both sides have made their respective bids for votes they will doubtless unite on a measure which will yield neither votes nor relief but will provide each with a campaign alibi. Although it is hard to contemplate the present bill with enthusiasm, it is harder to respect the President's purported objection to it. A hybrid offspring of the original Wagner and Garner plans, it would appropriate $300,000,000 for direct-aid loans to the States and $322,000,000 for public construction (to be used if and when the Treasury approves —meaning never), and would add $1,500,000,000 to the capital of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to be loaned to anyone furnishing adequate security. It is characteristic of Mr. Hoover's peculiar mind that he chose the last feature as the ground for his objection. He is willing to enlarge the capital of the government lending agency but unwilling to enlarge the class of persons and corporations eligible to borrow from it. Just why it is proper to make a loan to the Missouri Pacific Railroad to enable it to satisfy the bankers, but improper to make a loan to John Smith for a similar or more worthy purpose, is a question for the metaphysicians and crystal-gazers. Carried to a natural end, the President's logic means that all such loans are improper and discriminatory and that the R. F. C. never should have been created. As a matter of fact, that very conclusion has been forced on a number of people by the revelation that Charles G. Dawes's Chicago bank borrowed $80,000,000 from the R. F. C. a few days after he ceased to be president of the latter, although thirty-nine smaller Chicago banks were permitted to close their doors during the same month!

THE soundest case for government lending which has been heard in this vicinity was made out this week by Donald R. Richberg, representing the railway labor organizations in behalf of the Costigan-La Guardia bill. This measure would set up a government agency similar to the R. F. C. except that its business would be to extend credits not exceeding $500 each to unemployed heads of families, such credits to be expended for certain designated necessaries of life. In addition to relieving immediate existing distress, its object is to place purchasing power in the hands of those who would promptly use it in obtaining the products of essential industries, thus creating new employment. Sad experience with federal relief projects may prompt us to question the wisdom of all such policies, but every argument advanced in behalf of the R. F. C. applies with added force in behalf of the new proposal. If money injected at the top of the economic system may be expected to trickle to the bottom, then money injected at the bottom may be expected to climb to the top. The law of capillary attraction is fully as valid as the law of gravity—and, where money is concerned, is much more generally observed. And what, in God's name, is the sense of financing productive enterprises to turn out additional commodities for which there are no purchasers?

* * * * *

TURNING from the subject of hunger to that of thirst, I am confronted with the duty of conveying certain melancholy information to those citizens who have anticipated a quick change from the muddy *Heimgemacht* of sink and cellar to the sparkling lager of the breweries. Recent events undoubtedly mean the return of beer, but I shall be profoundly surprised if Congress passes a beer bill at this session. Politics again furnishes the answer. Wet Republican Senators and Representatives would like to help themselves and rob their Democratic opponents of an advantage by passing a beer bill now, but others in the party believe that such action would embarrass President Hoover and alienate the remainder of the dry votes. Moreover, the

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Democrats, perceiving that they have a popular issue, can see no reason for removing it from the campaign at this stage. If they could be certain that President Hoover would veto a beer bill they probably would pass one now and gladly let him face the music. He has indicated he would do exactly that, but they don't trust him. Consequently beer drinkers will have to keep up their home work for another year. As this unwelcome fact dawns upon them, the lives of their Congressmen will be filled with new worries, which is one reason so many Congressmen are eager to adjourn. Another reason is a growing belief that the Shivering Chameleon in the White House has reversed his tactics and now plans to use Congress as a whipping boy as long as he can. The publicity which rewarded his recent attacks on Speaker Garner and other Democrats apparently has opened his eyes to the fact that if he no longer had Congress to shoot at, the country might start shooting at him. Accordingly, a species of Old Guard filibuster is being conducted by Dave Reed in the Senate and Bert Snell in the House. These statesmen were recently declaring that the greatest blessing Congress could confer on the country would be to adjourn. Fortunately, they are capable of rising high above every consideration of principle when party welfare is at stake.

* * * * *

RETURNING from the Democratic convention, I find myself in a regrettable state of disagreement with the editors of *The Nation* over the merits of Governor Roosevelt's candidacy. It is true that his stealthy advance on the nomination was not exactly inspiring. Nor could one feel exalted over the deal by which he acquired the necessary delegates by giving John Garner second place on the ticket —although every honest man must have been tickled to see him get away without making a single concession to Tammany. More, if I were not a disfranchised citizen and taxpayer of the capital of the United States I should certainly vote for Norman Thomas as the most intelligent and courageous nominee in the field. But there are certain facts to be considered. One is that the real backers of the fight on Roosevelt were the public-utility interests. Indeed, one of the commonest arguments against him was that, since the public utilities are "the only people who have any ready money," Roosevelt's nomination would insure a generous campaign fund for Hoover. Knowing that he had been labeled "dangerous," "radical," and "demagogic," Roosevelt had an unparalleled opportunity in his speech of acceptance to assure Big Business that he was just as "safe" for it as Hoover. Instead, he definitely aligned himself on the opposite side. Regardless of whether his actual proposals were concrete or vague, the moral effect and implications of his speech are undeniable, and no realistic observer can doubt who will get the big campaign contributions. The contrast between the Republican and Democratic platforms needs no comment. To have such men as Justice Brandeis, Commissioner Eastman, Senator Norris, and Charles A. Beard in our midst at a time like this, and to know that, owing to the mysterious workings of democracy, we cannot have any one of them as President, is sheer tragedy and anguish, but realities must be faced. The next President will be Roosevelt or Hoover. Can anyone honestly say it makes no difference which? I cannot.

In the "Jungle"

By HAROLD M. WARE and LEMENT HARRIS

ON a trip through the agricultural byways of the country we have seen revealing things. We have seen one of the leading citizens of a small town, head of the local Red Cross office, brutally ignore the appeal of an unemployed farm worker—a young father, forced for the first time to ask for charity because his child was ill and needed medicine. We watched that man redden, then turn a long grim look upon the Red Cross worker who had handed back the doctor's prescription with the curt statement: "The Red Cross issues no funds for patent medicines!" Below his prescription the doctor had added, "One jar of Vick's Salve—Tom Ridgeley's baby has pneumonia and needs these remedies."

In the streets of villages we have seen husky men armed with ordinary house brooms. In talking to them one senses the white-hot resentment and shame they feel at becoming a public show as they pretend to sweep up imaginary horse manure among the omnipresent Fords. They are the personification of the theory that the poor must not be pauperized by a dole lest they prefer charity to labor. If the object is to make Americans hate charity, those who administer charity, and the people responsible for poverty, then the method is signally successful.

Certain streets in every city are reserved for cheap restaurants and employment agencies known in the vernacular of our farm workers as "slave markets." There we have watched men recently discharged anxiously scanning the blackboards, still puzzled by their fate and still hopeful that there is a job: "There must be! We aren't bums!" Yet just across the streets in the city parks sit innumerable veterans of the unemployed poignantly aware of their fate. With bitter cynicism they can rate the number of days a passing stiff has been out of work. Some can still pretend to be going somewhere, some carry their coats, others have none, some have only overalls and a terrible need for food and tobacco.

Crossing the plains of our country we have learned much about the "jungle"—that waste spot on the edge of the American city where the unemployed can camp. In Stockton, California, it is on the city dump along a drainage canal back of the wharves of the Sacramento River. When we saw it, smoke was rising from the shelters made by many groups, or "combinations" of several nationalities. For, "rugged individualism" notwithstanding, man is a social animal, and misery is making him more sociable in many ways. Each little group of unemployed was intent upon cooking messes of "food." The whole situation was fantastic. There, in sight of the city with its shops, an

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elevator storing grain on one side, a sugar plant on the other, and the food warehouses along the city wharves, these men, able and anxious to work, had scratched over the garbage piles of the warehouses, retrieved half-rotten carrots or onions or beans, peeled away the worst of them, and were boiling them in any old tin can they could salvage. We have been taught in the good old American fashion that this is a free country, and it is. These men had a free choice of three alternatives: they could steal, starve, or become scavengers.

As we walked through this graveyard of American civilization with its human and material refuse, we met one man who had recently owned a farm. It brought to our minds a phrase coined by a prominent writer for an agricultural journal who was theorizing on the reasons why farmers submit to low standards, and who had said: "Farming is a way of life, and it is *the equality of the poverty* that makes it bearable." Well, here in the "jungle" was a democracy, a taxless way of life, and an equality of poverty any dispossessed farmer might yearn for. And it really has great natural advantages—shelter, a free food supply, water, and a splendid isolation from the well-to-do and curious. Only when fate drives too many unemployed through the town in their pathetic search for imaginary work and these advantages tempt them to "hole in," does the town "law" bother them. Then heavy-soled boots kick apart these mean shelters. With characteristic American democracy no favoritism is shown. The poor fireplaces of Mexicans, Chinese, Filipinos, and Americans are all destroyed and the still tame population of the "jungle" is herded out of town. Can it be that our much-advertised "rugged individualism" fears to let men even suffer collectively?

It is not easy to walk among hungry men with a full stomach. But these men, strange as it may seem, are essential to the great agrarian companies which grow and pack your breakfast fruit and luncheon salads. And it is such migratory unemployed who normally pick and pack, all up and down the Pacific seaboard. We have been told by competent people that the number so employed has shrunk from 400,000 to about 265,000. The slack is expressed in terms of uncultivated acres, unpicked fruits, wives and children doing unaccustomed work in the fields—and the overcrowding in the "jungles" of the West.

Among the Americans here was a man who had been a lieutenant in the navy; another was an expert watchmaker who still packed his tools. One had been a house painter, but most of them had been farm workers for years. All were bitter against Hoover because he had done so little to help them. They still want work and have a conviction that the government could get it for them if it wanted to.

We have gone from one end of the Main Streets to the other. But nowhere have we found agricultural leaders or bankers looking far ahead for a solution. Instead, some of them are looking backwards a hundred years and fatuously prescribing the self-sustaining farm unit of covered-wagon days. All shake a pious head at the "extravagance" of farmers and workers who enlarged their farms or bought radios and bathtubs on the instalment plan. But to anyone who knows the "jungle" folk today this platitudinous hocus-pocus fails to dispel the conviction that unless something is done, the imaginary lines that separate masses of hungry men from great reservoirs of food will be broken.

In the Driftway

ONE of the Drifter's colleagues has just received an invitation. It is to join a "selective group of literary people" who will make a visit to a nudist colony not far from New York. "They will be driven to the camp," the letter stated, "where the typical nudist luncheon will be served." And the final paragraph declared: "Of course you understand that *all* visitors must disrobe before entering the camp. We hope you will come!" The Drifter's colleague seemed a little alarmed. He did not know, he said, what a typical nudist luncheon would consist of; he did not know the exact legal status of the nudist cult, and was a little uncomfortable at the thought of being escorted to the police station minus his suspenders; and finally he wanted to know "who else was going." It is all very well for the young, the slim, and the well-formed to dispense with their outer covering. But the rest of us who feel that life is sad enough at best do not wish to add unnecessarily to our burdens.

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THE Drifter is aware that the champions of nudism have a ready answer to this objection. One does not undress for appearance's sake, they say. Not for the good of the eye, but for the good of the soul, it is well to lay aside clothing. Take off your clothes, they say, and see how good you feel; see how the very country looks different, more fresh, more green, more clean and new. You can run better, walk better, lie more comfortably, swim more freely. And as your body is freer, so are you freed from the petty conventions and prurient curiosity that hamper men and women. Never having been a member of a nudist colony, the Drifter cannot testify as to the disappearance of pruriency. But he has spent some time outdoors without his clothing. And he was not always either free or even comfortable. In the latest book on nudism there is a charming picture of a young lady lovingly hugging a sheaf of wheat to her bare side. The sight made the Drifter quiver. For wheat is scratchy. There were other pictures of young persons prone upon the earth. But grass is scratchy; pebbles are sharp under foot and sharper to sit on; sand can scrape one's very hide off; the softest lawn, which under a shoe feels like velvet, contains a hundred needles to the square inch when approached by the bare pelt. The ground is rough to walk on, cold and hard to lie on. And stacking sheaves of wheat is something that should be done with a protection of blue-denim overall.

* * * * *

THIS combination of Philistinism and tender-footedness will doubtless cause the nudists to give three long shudders. But the Drifter does not really care. He counts among his friends a pioneer among them, a young man who, for all the years the Drifter has known him, has maintained, from head to heel, summer and winter, a uniform shade of handsome polished walnut. This young man, however, is less a nudist than a sun-worshiper. He likes to lie in the sun, on a bare rock, high up, *away from people*. This last he considers an indispensable adjunct to his enjoyment. Although

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there is no fiercer champion of nakedness than he, he entertains at the same time a deep suspicion of anything that sounds like a nudist colony. And the Drifter cannot help feeling that while there is much to say in favor of nakedness, this position is eminently sound.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Mr. Gill and Chicago

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: At a meeting of the Social Service Independent Committee for Political Action held May 31, 1932, the following resolutions were adopted and the secretary was instructed to send a copy to the editor of *The Nation*. They are apropos of Mauritz A. Hallgren's article, Help Wanted for Chicago in *The Nation* of May 11, which we believe unjustly misrepresents Mr. Gill.

WHEREAS Joseph L. Gill, Clerk of the Municipal Court of Chicago, has fulfilled in every particular his pre-election promises to reorganize the Social Service Department of the Municipal Court of Chicago; to divorce this department absolutely from politics; to appoint a committee of recognized leaders in social-service practice to compile and supervise examinations for all positions in the Social Service Department, and to act as a permanent advisory committee of the department, and further;

WHEREAS Mr. Gill, although not expected to place social-service workers in the "Renters' Court," did, at the acute stage of unrest caused by family evictions in August, 1931, voluntarily extend his Social Service Department to this Civil Court Branch, and thus perform a service of inestimable value to the social agencies of Chicago and Cook County and to the city at large; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Social Service Independent Committee for Political Action express its appreciation of Mr. Gill's earnest and energetic action in organizing and maintaining a Social Service Department in the Municipal Court of Chicago with a trained professional personnel free from any political, racial, or religious influences.

Chicago, June 10 IRENE JEAN CRANDALL

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Through misinterpretation of information given to me by a person who has closely followed Mr. Gill's work I appear to have done Mr. Gill an injustice. I do not hesitate to apologize for my error, which was certainly not intentional.

New York, June 12 MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

For Readers in Manila

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I should like very much to get in touch with *Nation* readers and like-minded people in and around Manila, who would be interested in joining an informal discussion group.

Such a group is very much needed here, and I'm sure that *Nation* readers would enjoy meeting one another occasionally. Anyone who is interested may communicate with me at Box 1650, Manila, Philippine Islands.

Manila, P. I., June 20 R. B. BLACKMAN

Miners' Relief

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: There is a situation in the coal fields of West Virginia to which I should like to call the attention of your readers, many of whom will remember the strike of the West Virginia Mine Workers Union last summer. Since that strike many of the victimized families have lived in tent colonies; there are at present sixty-nine families still living in tents.

In addition to strike victimization, unemployment for other causes is rampant in the valley. Charity as well as State and county funds have been exhausted for months, and the condition of the unemployed and especially of the miners hidden away in isolated camps has now become desperate—so desperate that six children and one woman have died in the past two weeks and many more are at the point of death. An epidemic of flux has broken out in the tent colony at Ward and two children have died from the disease. Thirteen other children and the father of one of the babies who died are now in bed seriously sick. At Blakely, farther up the mountain than Ward, where there was a tent colony most of the winter, four small children and a woman have died of the same cause in the past fortnight. Flux, the county doctor says, is caused by malnutrition. There is a letter here in the union office today from a sick family in the Ward tent colony asking us to send up olive oil and milk of magnesia for the dying children. We do not have the money with which to comply with this request.

Money for relief may be sent to George Scherer, Secretary, West Virginia Mine Workers Union, Room 9, Old Kanawha Valley Bank Building, Charleston, West Virginia.

Charleston, W. Va., June 20 TOM TIPPETT

The Indian Bureau

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Allow me to call to your attention the present deplorable condition of the American Indians. I quote from their petition to the Senate: "When Secretary Wilbur and Commissioners Rhoads and Scattergood took office in 1929, we were led to feel a wonderful hope. They announced great programs and made great promises. We assert that they have forsaken their programs. They have broken their promises. They have new evils of far-reaching kinds—evils which their predecessors did not sponsor." They have not supported the legislation they promised. On the contrary, openly or by delay and obstruction, they have fought it.

Further, these officials have illegally seized thousands of square miles of Indian tribal lands and leased them to whites. They have forced allotted Indians to sign over power of attorney to Indian agents who lease the land to whites. They have blocked the Frazier bill for an honest and business-like accounting of Indian Bureau money. They have, with ostentatious virtue, closed down just three, or 2.2 per cent of the notorious boarding-schools. They have done their utmost to prevent payment of the money due the Pueblos for their land and water lost through government neglect. They have delayed the sending of available Department of Agriculture money for the starving sheep, which are the livelihood of the Navajos.

The full account of these doings may be read in the Congressional Record of the Senate's proceedings on March 9, 10, and 11, 1932, or in the reprint obtainable from the American Indian Defense Association, 219 First St., N. E., Washington, D. C.

Columbus, Ohio, May 24 CONSTANCE NICE

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What Is a Poet?

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: In the excellent discussion of the characteristics of a poet—taken as the type of all artists—by Mark Van Doren, the final distinction can amount to no more than the self-evident definition that the poet writes poetry—that he is not essentially different from other men. However, the difficulty which Mr. Van Doren recognized in attempting to reconcile the popular belief that an artist is extraordinarily sensitive with the logical truism that he uses his strongest emotional experiences for the purpose of his art constitutes a principal distinction between the worlds of art and non-art.

The artist's individual reaction to experience, whether directly personal or observed even indirectly through the most remote vicarious sources, must be sufficiently stronger than that of other men to enable him to record it with unequaled power, or it must awaken within him related thoughts and feelings which will enrich his work through the perspective or orientation they lend to the theme of which he treats. These two trends, incidentally, point the difference between the simplest poetry of passion and that which seeks to convey the greatest possible number of ideas and feelings within a minimum number of lines. The primitive purity of folk poetry is typical of the former, the richly burdened works of Keats of the latter.

In this sense it is genuinely true that the artist must be almost abnormally sensitive to impressions and thoughts; but this very sensitiveness may prove his undoing if undisciplined, as with the extremists of the French romantic movement. Herein the power to treat these powerful emotional experiences with an objectivity of expression is necessary—it is here that the lofty and complete steadiness of view which is Arnold's characterization of supreme art in Sophocles takes its origin. This is the paradox of art, that the poet is sensitive to impressions beyond the common, but that, if he follows a proper artistic discipline, the most intense of personal emotions will affect him less than the man in the street. He may almost be said to use his emotions for purposes of business, but that is part of the price of artistic creation. The poet sacrifices his privacy to a great extent—traditionally, at least—and his apparent callousness is needed both as a shield to this condition and as a means to artistic objectivity.

Detroit, Mich., June 6 Haviland Ferguson Reves

Dining with *The Nation*

To the Editor of the Nation:

Sir: A few *Nation* readers in Washington, D. C., actuated by a desire to further the cause, want to organize a dining club. We will give you a vote of thanks if you will ask your other readers of like mind hereabouts to send their names and addresses to me at 2630 Adams Mill Road.

Washington, D. C., June 15 Frederick Haller

For New Jersey Readers

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: If there are any *Nation* readers in Union County, New Jersey, interested in forming a local discussion group, I should like to have them communicate with me at 319 East Dudley Avenue, Westfield, New Jersey.

Westfield, N. J., June 25 Malcolm B. Ayres

Finance

England Converts the War Loan

With one of those sweeping operations which excited admiration and wonder in times past, the British government has announced its intention of retiring its 5 per cent War Loan, issued in 1917, and substituting for it a 3½ per cent issue. This appears to be, by all odds, the greatest refunding project undertaken by any government, for the War Loan is outstanding in the amount of more than £2,000,000,000; say, nominally, $9,740,000,000, or $7,200,000,000 on the present gold value of the pound. The new bonds will bear an interest rate as low as any of our own Liberty Loan issues; in fact, our 3½ per cent Liberty bonds confer upon their owners complete exemption from State and federal taxes, save only estate and inheritance taxes, whereas the British bonds paying that rate will be subject to income tax. Moreover, in the preliminary announcement nothing is said about maturity, and the investor is merely asked to surrender his old 5's and accept 3½'s in lieu thereof, in the confidence that British credit is fairly priced at the latter figure and will continue to be so priced indefinitely.

The investor will not be compelled to accept this smaller return. He can, if he chooses, demand cash—provided he so notifies the authorities by September 30 next. In times like these, when bondholders are supposed to long for nothing so much as cash, such an option of payment appears audacious. To issue only half as much paper money as would be temporarily required to redeem the issue would swamp the British credit mechanism and send the pound sterling to depths not hitherto touched. There are, in fact, some indications that large amounts of cash will be demanded. Numerous British banks, knowing the loan was soon to be called in, are reported to be holding large amounts of it as a short-term investment, and these institutions presumably will be unwilling to accept a long-dated or perpetual obligation in exchange.

Moreover, it is estimated that some £200,000,000 of War Loan is held abroad, and non-British owners may not be attracted by so low an interest rate, payable in a fluctuating currency. They, in particular, may want cash; but it so happened that in the British budget introduced last March a huge fund of £150,000,000 was set up for the avowed purpose of preventing the pound sterling from rising in value too fast, as it then showed a tendency to do. The natural way to keep the pound down would be to utilize this fund to buy credit balances abroad; to the extent that this has been done the British authorities are now in funds to meet War Loan payments.

Thus, with forethought and precision, England is preparing to deal with a pressing fiscal problem and save for the Exchequer some £23,000,000 annually in interest payments. Already British bonds have advanced sharply on the news—and already sterling exchange has had a rather bad break in New York. The financial odds against London are still heavy, but the traditional method of dealing with the difficulty nearest at hand is being followed with courage and assurance. If one of the world's main troubles today is the burden of debt, England is striking at the root of it by scaling down the debt. In the United States we have no pressing problem of retiring high-rate bonds and substituting others carrying lower coupons. On the contrary, the Treasury is borrowing at ridiculously low rates on short-term bills and certificates. The funding of that floating debt, now uncomfortably large, into long-term and more costly obligations is likely to provide the ultimate test of American financial skill and foresight. S. Palmer Harman

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Books and Films

Emerson: Last Days at Concord

By HORACE GREGORY

O my America at Concord's bridge
true marriage of the east and west Brahma
whose lips nurse at my veins
Where was the green brass cannon
sunken in churchyards after the shots were fired;
listen, the world is sleeping and the noise
coils in thunder where Dover's beach
shall wake no more
and the Indian ocean
pours its blood into the sun when evening's tide
uncovers bones upon the shore.
Cut me a frock coat: for the oversoul
sleeps naked; parts, limbs (united
with death in a broken coffin) expose, o violent nether flesh!
to quick March winds
Where are your lips, hands, Brahma
What was the name, your name or mine?
Come friend
we shall walk in the west orchard drinking russet wine
kiss daisies where the transcendental tree
(look how the death worm feeds upon its roots)
shelters our love and fiery blossoms fall in Plato's vineyard
I have rolled the world in my brain, have seen its heroes
diminish
saw oceans, continents dissolve in sunlight
on Concord window sills.
Are you my friend,
then here's my secret I have forgotten
all friends and the words that joined my lips to theirs
Better to keep faith
and believe
no one. Better to be a patriot disowning
this land: Give back America to sunlight wind and rain
Set sail for India from Concord's bridge,
leap to the quarter deck where our Columbus
once more commands his ships.
Is that a storm in the sky
And are these apples ripe? I grew this orchard to be a paradise
this side of Eden.

David Hume

The Letters of David Hume. Edited by J. Y. T. Greig. Oxford University Press. Two volumes. $15.

THESE two volumes are the most comprehensive edition of David Hume's correspondence yet published. They contain 548 of the philosopher's letters, of which 59 have never been published before, and of which 120 have been published only imperfectly. In addition, there is a very extensive appendix containing some of the most important letters to Hume from various correspondents. Mr. Greig is an admirable editor. His footnotes are generous but never redundant, and they are extremely readable in themselves.

It cannot be said that the new letters throw any essential new light on Hume's character. That character, far from complex, was a very simple and transparent one. The most detached and impartial of men, Hume himself described it with great accuracy:

> I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humor, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my humor, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments.

Only two leading qualities are omitted in this account, though both are in a way implied—his great kindliness and his great complacency. Even his inflexible resolution "never to reply to anybody" springs as much from the second of these qualities as the first. He seldom seems to have doubted his ability to crush an opponent if he really felt inclined to. To one correspondent who had criticized his "Treatise of Human Nature" severely, he merely replied: "The truth is, I could take no revenge, but such a one as would have been a great deal too cruel, and much exceeding the offense." More frequently he contented himself with remarking: "With regard to our philosophical systems, I suppose we are both so fixed that there is no hope of any conversions betwixt us; and for my part, I doubt not but we shall both do as well to remain as we are."

When this amiable complacency has been remarked upon, there is very little that can be said against the character of David Hume. The only occasion on which his astonishing equanimity was upset was that of the famous quarrel with Rousseau. When the latter was obliged to leave France, Hume befriended him, offered him an asylum in England, wrote all his friends to say how amiable and virtuous Rousseau was, mild, gentle, modest, affectionate, disinterested, "a perfect child in the ordinary occurrences of life." "The philosophers of Paris foretold to me," he wrote Hugh Blair, "that I could not conduct him to Calais without a quarrel; but I think I could live with him all my life, in mutual friendship and esteem." He put Rousseau up at the country place of a friend and arranged to have George III grant him a pension. Out of these blue skies Rousseau suddenly accused Hume of conspiring with his enemies to dishonor him, and wrote a long, violent, denunciatory letter. The good David was so thunderstruck that for months he could think of nothing but "the monstrous ingratitude, ferocity, and frenzy of the man," and he now wrote all his friends that Rousseau was "surely the blackest and most atrocious villain, beyond comparison, that now exists in the world." After a while he was willing to agree that perhaps Rousseau was less a villain than an "arrant madman." What is especially interesting about this extreme judgment is that it was shared and, indeed, had long been anticipated, by most of the leading French writers, by D'Alembert, Voltaire, and Diderot, among others. One cannot but feel that it was in large part the result of the inadequate psychology and vocabulary of the eighteenth century. It knew only sanity and madness: it had no satisfactory words for the many intermediary stages and kinds of neuroticism and paranoia, and hence it never really understood Rousseau.

When Hume had regained his composure he was once more the serenest and most detached of men. Few writers of the eighteenth century had so wide and eminent a circle of correspondents—among them Adam Smith, Francis Hutcheson, Lord Kames, Montesquieu, Horace Walpole, William Robertson, Benjamin Franklin, Hugh Blair, Turgot, Smollett, D'Alembert, Gibbon. The letters as a whole, however, are disappointing in one important respect: though they are written with the dulcet lucidity that distinguishes Hume's books and essays, they tell much more about him as a man than as a thinker. He seemed either to feel that his philosophic ideas

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needed a great deal more room to turn around in than a letter provided, or he was afraid of boring his correspondents by discussing them, or he was lazy. Even, for example, when his friend Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" appeared, he contented himself with twenty lines of comment—containing two very shrewd criticisms, one of them an anticipation of Ricardo's theory of rent—and added, "But these and a hundred other points are fit only to be discussed in conversation." The letters, therefore, while unfailingly pleasant and agreeable, fall far short of doing justice to the greatest of British philosophers, and one of the most acute and candid intellects that the world has ever seen.

HENRY HAZLITT

The Talent of Charles Morgan

The Fountain. By Charles Morgan. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

MR. MORGAN'S affinity, apparently, is with the contemplative, the introspective, for this is his third novel dealing with the type. It is also by far his best, and for the most part deserving of the praise it has received. Its action—an unhappy word to apply to a book whose sole concern is with the mystery of the spiritual life—takes place mainly on the great landed estate of the Van Leydens, not far from The Hague. To it comes Lewis Alison, a young English officer interned for the duration of the war, now entering its last phase. Alison is a singularly un-twentieth-century character, a combination of the lover, the scholar, and the mystic. He belongs, indeed, in the century to which his spirit most naturally returns—the English seventeenth.

Throughout the story he disciplines himself like an anchorite, preparing for the writing of a history of the contemplative life in England. It is Alison's purpose "to discover an inviolable ghost in the sensible body," to create within himself a constant spirit of detachment which will not, at the same time, remove him from the stresses and strains of mundane life. (This problem, by the way, though it is very clearly and intelligently posed by the author, is never, at least to one reader's satisfaction, completely solved.) "Though the contemplative life was rare [thinks Alison] the contemplative desire was universal, being, in the spirit, what the sexual desire is in the flesh, the prime mover of mankind. Contemplative stillness is but the name for a state of invulnerability, and to be invulnerable is what all men desire."

This "invulnerability," Alison's deepest concern and the aesthetic groundswell of the entire book, is threatened by the love he develops for Julie von Narwitz, an English girl connected with the Van Leydens. Julie, however, reoriented by her passion for Alison, cleaves to what is central in him. Their love, while it remains rooted in its sensual base, flowers into a joint adventure, a common search for "invulnerability." (How Santayana, with his idealistic naturalism, would admire "The Fountain"!) The homecoming and the death of Rupert, Julie's husband, overcasts at the same time that it deepens their relationship; but Rupert, too, in the Prussian—as Alison in the English—manner, seeks the inviolable citadel; and so the three, forming a unique triangle, come to understand one another. At the end, indeed, it is Rupert's stoic wisdom, far more noble and inflexible than Alison's, which serves to bring the lovers together.

Mr. Morgan is not the supreme master that the pernicious London claque has made him out to be, but he is a beautiful and accomplished writer. He deals with very special characters and very special domains of life; but within his carefully chosen limits he works precisely and movingly. There are technical faults even in this exquisitely written book—the conclusion is a little soft, the scene of Von Narwitz's death is melodramatic, and the major characters are just a bit too noble to be quite credible—but on the whole "The Fountain" is the most distinguished novel England has sent us for some years.

The real proof of Mr. Morgan's artistry is the spell he is able to cast over those to whom his point of view is antipathetic. The intellectual premises from which "The Fountain" proceeds are belief in some (unspecified) form of immortality, acceptance of the necessity for "a privileged and responsible class," respect for the traditional virtues of an enlightened aristocracy, a feeling for art as "a cloister" where men may "cool their fevers in this world." Mr. Morgan's contemplative ideal assumes a body-mind dualism which many of us would cavalierly reject. The life his hero would like to live can be enjoyed only at the expense of less fortunate beings and must inevitably involve some evasion of reality, some form of intellectual blinking. Yet Mr. Morgan, without dogmatism, without snobbishness, with remarkable persuasiveness, writes as if this life were manifestly compatible with the highest morality, and as if the values upon which it is erected were eternal, platonically essential, and independent of the changing forms of society. He is so fine an artist, so adept an arranger of his scene, that his central idea becomes almost convincing. The war is but a faraway backdrop for his genuinely idyllic picture of the Holland countryside; and so firmly, so confidently are his leisurely aristocrats drawn that it is with a start we realize that they are no more—that they have disappeared since the time of which Mr. Morgan is writing.

Fifty years from now, let us hope, the society and the ideology upon which "The Fountain" is based will have vanished, and the book itself will appear to readers as a lovely but quaint historical novel. Any sensitive reader of today will be glad to admit that no novel of the last generation has developed more beautifully or more imaginatively the antique morals and metaphysics of the author of the "Phaedo."

CLIFTON FADIMAN

American Exile

Year Before Last. By Kay Boyle. Harrison Smith. $2.50.

IT is not surprising that the story of the exile has had a strong appeal for the American novelist, nor in another sense is it surprising that novels revolving around expatriates have found comparatively wide American audiences. The predicament of the exile, more or less isolated in a society he can only partially understand, and unable to communicate freely with those around him, perhaps corresponds with the predicament of the individual in American society more closely than we ordinarily acknowledge. Moreover, the expatriate colony (as a numerically small group whose members are loosely bound together by common interests, by a common language and a common point of view, surrounded by people with whom they have only mechanical or commercial contacts) is not greatly different from the American social unit, particularly the social unit of the metropolis. By emphasizing the lack of understanding between the group and those outside it—Hemingway's international associates in Spain are an example—the novelists have called attention to a similar situation in American life, where the diversity of specialized experiences and the absence of unifying traditions have created barriers to communication almost as great as those supplied by the lack of a common language. It is noteworthy that the exile in "Year Before Last," living in France, can scarcely understand French, and that his patroness, with partial control of his livelihood, is deaf.

Kay Boyle has concentrated on establishing the repulsion of her hero by society, and in this she has been remarkably

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successful. He is spiritually and physically outcast: his occupation—he is a poet, and editor of a literary magazine—cuts him off from an age in which poetry is not held in great esteem; his illness, tuberculosis, forces him to abandon one refuge after another as the tradespeople enforce a kind of unconscious boycott against him. Since he is dependent for his livelihood on the generosity of the deaf and eccentric Scotchwoman, and since she is given to sulkiness and fits of petulance, his income is uncertain and irregular. But these are only the obvious ways in which the isolation is established. It is implicit in what is seen and in the interpretation of events, and it controls the descriptions of physical objects, so much so that in the end mountains and rooms are made to seem unfriendly or hostile. One clear impression is gained from these accumulated rebuffs: the writing of poetry becomes a desperate and furtive business, a hopeless and endless conspiracy against some unknown enemy.

In conveying this impression Kay Boyle reveals a rich and resourceful imagination; the means by which the effect is created are varied and the images are always unusual and frequently striking. The paradox is that a note of artificiality, a suggestion of an emotional inflation, comes from the same source that makes the poet's position tragic—that is, from an overprecious conception of the purposes of poetry. Like her hero, Kay Boyle seems to identify excellence in writing almost exclusively with uniqueness of phrase, and with this basic conception poetry seems, indeed, a lost and futile art, and poets a haggard and desperate crew. The reading her poet enjoys and remembers is principally remarkable for a kind of homely unusualness of statement. Literature is not a vocabulary, he says, it is a taste, and if you can give someone else the taste for it, then you are a writer. All this is indicative of that attitude which holds that poetry is but an added ornament to living, a luxury, instead of a development of communication and a need. But within the limits set by the subject, "Year Before Last" states its case as few contemporary novels do; it is a notable advance in a career that already includes "Wedding Day" and "Plagued by the Nightingales."

ROBERT CANTWELL

Unspectacular Realism

Young Lonigan. By James T. Farrell. The Vanguard Press. $3.75.

THE publishers of this first novel show signs of a peculiar neurosis—a fear of censorship and the hope that people who see that a book is advertised for "doctors only" will storm the book shops and empty their pockets to secure a copy. The book is innocent. Only the most obscene and stunted mind could find salacious delight in Mr. Farrell's use of Chicago street slang—and bolder words than his are now appearing regularly in the novels of John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway. Incidentally the book happens to be an unusually good first novel, and if "physicians, surgeons, and psychiatrists" are interested in the development of the American novel, they should be urged to buy it, read it, and remember the name of the author.

The story of "Young Lonigan" bears all the marks of being a young man's autobiography. The scene is Chicago's South Side, in the heart of what was once an Irish settlement but has now been invaded by Negroes, Italians, and Jews. The hero, a fifteen-year-old boy graduating from the primary classes of a Catholic school, is a product of the lower middle class. The background of such a boy's life is of course the street; his leaders are gang leaders; and whatever he learns outside of school is picked up at corner drug-stores and pool halls. Contrasted with the reality of street language and the excitement of adolescent sexual adventure, the platitudes recited at school and glibly rolled from the lips of obtuse, ignorant parents seem very like inept quotations from a dead literature.

Nothing extraordinary happens; a series of street fights, swimming parties, kissing games provides the action of the book. It is not long, however, before we realize that young Spuds Lonigan's environment is deadly. The bleak wide streets, the roaring of the El, the spiritual and actual poverty of more than a million people crowded within a restricted area—all point toward disaster. A pragmatic philosophy of dog eat dog is enforced, and an amoral world ruled by boys who will make future henchmen for adult gangsters takes shape.

Young Spuds himself has natural ambitions to be a tough guy, to be a "champion." Mr. Farrell has scrupulously avoided any exaggeration of his impulses or desires. He is emotionally stirred by the sight of his sister in a nightgown, but the emotion sinks inward. He falls in love with a girl of his own age, but the affair never progresses beyond kissing games and holding hands. Mr. Farrell's unblinking, open-eyed veracity reminds one of Theodore Dreiser at his best.

A word or two should be said about Mr. Farrell's prose. "Young Lonigan" is written in the harsh, flat vernacular of the American Middle West. The surfaces are crude and clumsy, almost inarticulate, yet Mr. Farrell has used this medium with great skill, revealing young Lonigan's emotions with delicate understanding. The few words that have evidently frightened Mr. Farrell's publishers fall naturally into the pattern of his style; here if anywhere is a legitimate use of a realistic idiom.

The effects produced by Mr. Farrell's novel are not dramatic but cumulative, and for that reason its closing chapters retain their hold upon the reader's imagination long after the earlier sections of the book are forgotten. There is real horror in one of its final scenes: a small Jewish boy is attacked, beaten, and robbed by young Lonigan's gang. Here one might say is the beginning of another Arnold Rothstein. As for Spuds Lonigan, he has gained nothing from his increasing brutality but a confused sense of bewilderment and a disorganized will-to-power.

Mr. Farrell has built his first novel upon a solid foundation that may be characterized as honest, unspectacular realism clothed in a vigorous, well-rounded style. I believe that he is one of the two or three young novelists in America whose future work bears watching. In a brief introduction to this volume Professor Thrasher of New York University vouches for the accuracy of Mr. Farrell's social observation.

HORACE GREGORY

The Carpet-Bag Era

South Carolina During Reconstruction. By Francis Butler Simkins and Robert Hilliard Woody. University of North Carolina Press. $8.

THIS book is significant in that it marks a new development in the historiography of the reconstruction period. The older Northern historians regarded this epoch as one in which the natural fruits of victory were garnered. That certain unfortunate incidents accompanied the process was attributed to the apostasy of Andrew Johnson and the rebellious spirit of the Southern whites. To the extent that reconstruction was undone, it was accomplished by unjustifiable violence, intimidation, and fraud. This school of historians was followed by another (mostly Southern) who looked upon the whole business of reconstruction as the work of hypocritical politicians who for partisan purposes wreaked vengeance upon a brave and defenseless foe through the agency of "Carpet-baggers," "Scalawags," and "Smart Niggers." These unspeakable scoundrels

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and all their nefarious works were irredeemably damned. The undoing of reconstruction was the commendable work of high-minded men who were determined that Anglo-Saxon civilization should not be destroyed by African barbarism. To the extent that it was accompanied by violence, intimidation, and fraud the noble end more than justified the regrettable means.

To neither of these points of view do Messrs. Simkins and Woody subscribe. That the period of reconstruction was indeed a "tragic era" and "an age of hate" they by no means deny. That corruption was all too prevalent at Columbia and in the county seats is freely conceded. That many of the white and Negro Republican politicians were venal is unquestioned. However, there were exceptions. From reading the political part of the narrative one gains the impression that while practical politics was rotten enough, its reputation was a good deal blacker than the thing itself. The political game was conducted with more naivete and less finesse than is ordinarily the case. Moreover, the players were hated outsiders, scorned "inferiors," or despised renegades whose every act was closely watched by hostile contemporaries and investigated in minutest detail by hypercritical successors.

But the greater part of the volume is not devoted to politics. Thirteen of the twenty chapters deal with social, economic, religious, and educational matters. In these chapters the authors point out that many of the innovations of the reconstruction era survive to this day. Among the more notable of these are the liberty of the Negroes to manage their own church affairs, the system of land tenure which permits the Negro tenant considerable freedom in the operation of his farm, and social adjustments in which the Negro is given an opportunity to aspire to many things that would have been denied him under the sort of peonage to which his former masters were ready to assign him. Moreover, "the principle of the equality of all men before the law was then grafted into the judicial practice of the State . . . and the right of all to attend State-supported schools" was also accomplished. "Although the makers of the constitution of 1895 [native white Democrats] roundly attacked the constitution of 1868, the document they produced is scarcely more than a revision of the handiwork of the radicals."

In short, Messrs. Simkins and Woody, without appearing polemical, defend the thesis that reconstruction was in fact a revolution. Like all revolutions it had its seamy and tragic sides, but also, like others, it marked an advance in the long struggle for human liberty and equality. That two South Carolinians have given this turn to the narrative of an eventful epoch in the history of their State is a hopeful indication that that struggle still possesses some vitality.

BENJAMIN B. KENDRICK

Notes on Fiction

The Quick and the Dead. By Claire Spencer. Harrison Smith. $2.50.

In "Gallows' Orchard" Miss Spencer wrote a vigorous story of strangely harassed and thwarted persons. But the novel, with all its virtues, gave an annoying impression of artificiality, and one constantly felt that the author was straining for effect. "The Quick and the Dead" contains all the faults of its predecessor and exhibits few of its good qualities. Miss Spencer works very hard to describe the emotions of her characters, but she never once succeeds in making those characters interesting or their emotions contagious. Her puppets assume grotesque attitudes, but one is conscious only of the hard-working woman who is pulling the strings. Though it is a little difficult to know just what Miss Spencer is driving at, the book is presumably a study of maladjustment. Since, however, neither Peter nor the world in which he lives is made convincing, the reader is not particularly enlightened.

Babylon on Hudson. Anonymous. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

In some ways this novel has features that recommend it: an acceptance of large social problems as a legitimate field for fiction, a few shrewd characterizations, an unpretentious style sustained at a level somewhat above the average. These do not entirely compensate for the tedious rehashings of Spengler, for the aimlessness of the work as a whole, or for the grave error in judgment that allowed the author to employ his dullest character (a pompous lawyer goes about muttering "Can such things be?") as his observer. As a general rule, Spengler's point of view seems to produce unsatisfactory novels. The characters have a tendency to accept whatever happens, from adultery to stomach trouble, as evidence of the Decline of the West.

Soft Answers. By Richard Aldington. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Mr. Aldington feels so candid a distaste for his characters that the reader grows somewhat uncomfortable before this collection of stories is finished; reading it is like listening to long and sarcastic character sketches of someone's bitterest enemies. The distaste is communicated; the causes of it are not. The stories turn upon the exposure of hypocrisy, affectation, and stupidity, rising to burlesque in the account of an intellectual's conversion to Catholicism, in Stepping Heavenward, and degenerating to aimless and tedious gossip in Nobody's Baby. All the characters seem so unimportant that one cannot understand why they merit ridicule.

Letter from an Unknown Woman. By Stefan Zweig. Translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul. The Viking Press. $1.25.

In this excellent novelette, cast in a mold whose simplicity is deceptive, the author of "Amok" has told a singularly tender and passionate story. On his birthday a famous novelist receives a letter from an unknown woman. The woman is writing by the deathbed of her only son, the novelist's son as the letter in due time reveals. And to the growing astonishment of the recipient of the letter he learns that his correspondent has devoted her whole life to him, that she loved him even as a child when she caught her first glimpse of him. Later, as a young woman, whom he thought he had picked up lightly, she gave herself to him, and still later, as a woman of the world, once again, without his ever knowing or troubling to learn who she might be, and without once understanding that the child, the girl, and the mature woman were one and the same person.

Pigeon Irish. By Francis Stuart. The Macmillan Company. $2.

This novel is laid in the Ireland of the future, at a time when war is destroying the rest of the world. A never very coherent revolt is built around the idea of preserving small bits of Ireland against the peace; closed parks, it seems, to house old traditions. With the initial difficulties offered by this theme, the novel is well done. The characters are clearly captured, and apt and realistic details break down the sense of remoteness and make the fantasy credible. The meaning is never altogether clear. From the enthusiastic praise of Yeats and others one gathers that the novel has some special significance for the Irish that is missed by the American reader. A curious effect is produced by this fanciful and whimsical handling of a subject that seems to demand a Swiftian bitterness.

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Films

Personality or Talent?

"MERTON OF THE MOVIES," the novel of Harry Leon Wilson, and later the great stage hit of a few years ago, has now been made into a film with the new name of "Make Me a Star" (Paramount). One cannot say with certainty whether Mr. Wilson set out deliberately to burlesque the movies. It is probable that all he was interested in was to tell the amusing story of a small-town simpleton whose naive earnestness and weird notions of acting are adroitly used by a film company to turn him into a star comedian. The public, however, unquestionably regarded the play as a skit on the movies and on the absurd way in which ignorant and talentless nobodies rise to the dizzy heights of stardom. It cannot be denied that an implication to this effect, whether intentional or not, is present in the story. The stage version certainly saw the movies as if they were merely a vulgar copy of the stage. "Look," it seemed to be saying, "how ludicrous it all is. A fellow may be an utter fool and not know a thing about acting, but in this crazy movie world even his foolishness and ignorance can appear as a talent for acting." To which one can only reply, "And why not?"

For the ability to act and particularly to act intelligently, with the full realization of the effect of every movement, gesture, or inflection of the voice, which is what good acting means on the stage, is really not an essential requirement for good film acting. In the days of the silent films, when "Merton of the Movies" was written, film acting neither did nor could resemble acting on the stage, although in the general treatment of their material the movie directors tried their hardest to imitate the stage play. So, at that time, the jibe of "Merton of the Movies" was substantially beside the point. Today, in this era of talkies, it would have been more justified on general grounds, since the talking picture does imitate stage acting, in its misguided attempt to reproduce stage dialogue and situations. But is it quite true in fact? I do not think so. The majority of the film actors of today are recruited from the stage, and although there are quite enough incompetents among them, I doubt that the number is any greater than is found in the theater. What is more important, the acting ability that shows off most successfully on the screen is decidedly of a lower degree of competence than that required on the stage. Unlike the stage actor, the film actor appears best when he acts least. All he needs is personality, character, for this is enough to make his acting both natural and convincing. For this reason an actor like James Cagney, who would probably cut no figure at all on the stage, makes one of the best screen actors; whereas Edward G. Robinson, who acts very effectively on the stage, seems forced and unconvincing when he does his very intelligent and expert "acting" on the screen.

Not without its own unconscious humor is the fact that "Make Me a Star," which makes fun of unconscious humor in screen acting, belies its moral by demonstrating the superiority of natural character acting over the more dextrous "impersonation" of a character. Stuart Erwin, who plays the small-town boy crashing the studio gate by his disarming artlessness, is perhaps too comic a character for his part, but his acting is natural and he succeeds in being telling without any display of histrionics. Miss Joan Blondell, on the other hand, is much more of an actress, and her persistent efforts to play the part, emphasizing her points with facial expression, fall mostly flat precisely because of that emphasis.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

Contributors to This Issue

LOUIS FISCHER, Moscow correspondent of *The Nation*, is the author of "Machines and Men in Russia."

J. A. HOBSON is one of the foremost British economists and a contributing editor of *The Nation*.

PAUL Y. ANDERSON is the national correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

HAROLD M. WARE and LEMENT HARRIS have recently made an agricultural survey of the United States.

HORACE GREGORY, author of "Chelsea Rooming House," will have a new volume of verse published in the fall by Harcourt, Brace and Company.

CLIFTON FADIMAN is head of the editorial department of Simon and Schuster.

ROBERT CANTWELL is author of "Laugh and Lie Down."

BENJAMIN B. KENDRICK is professor of history at the North Carolina College for Women, and is coauthor with Louis M. Hacker of "The United States Since 1865."

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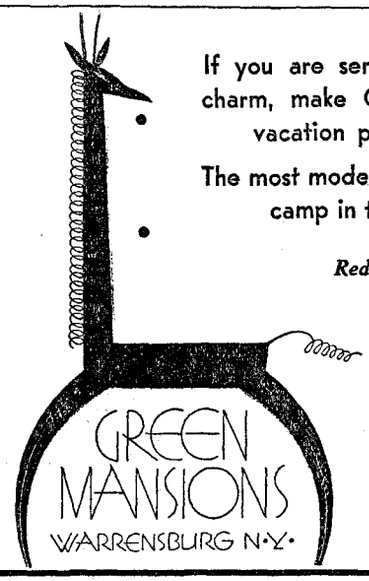

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